



# Making Work Matter

## What Students Gain from Their Student Employment Experience

Benchworks Research Note  
April 2025

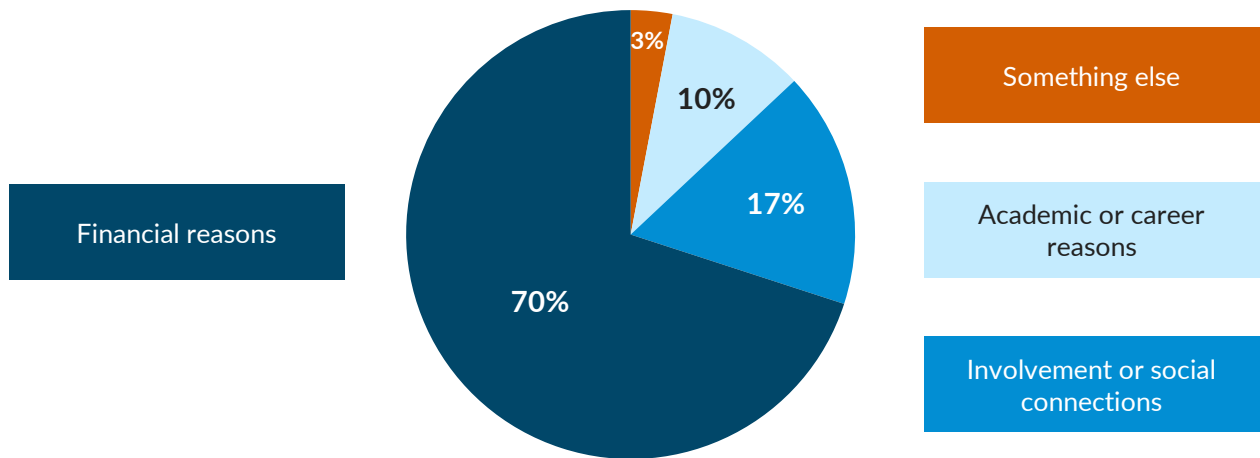
**“I took this job to make ends meet—but I’ve gained way more than just a paycheck.”**

Student employment is a widespread and impactful part of the college experience. Whether students are helping with residence life, campus activities, multicultural programs, advising, or campus rec, these roles go beyond administrative support. They often shape how students learn, grow, and feel connected to their campus community.

Data from the 2023–2024 Benchworks Student Employee Assessment shows that while most students are drawn to these roles for financial reasons, many also seek personal and professional growth.

**FIGURE 1.**  
**Why Students Work On Campus**

Distribution of responses to the survey question “What was the primary reason for your student employment?”



The sections that follow explore who these student employees are, what they learn through the experience, and how it prepares them for the future.



## Who Are Our Student Employees?

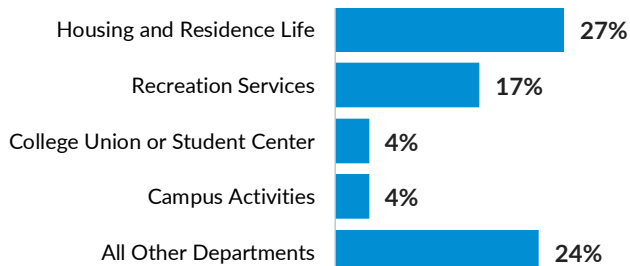


*“I love that I can go to class, then go straight to work without leaving campus. It makes me feel like I belong here.”*

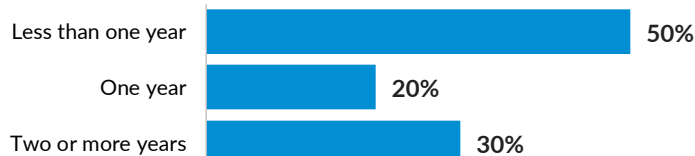
Figure 2 breaks down the percentage of student employees by department, time in their current role, average weekly work hours, and plans to return next year. The majority plan to continue in their roles, indicating a positive and lasting connection to the experience.

**FIGURE 2.**  
**Characteristics of Student Employee Positions**

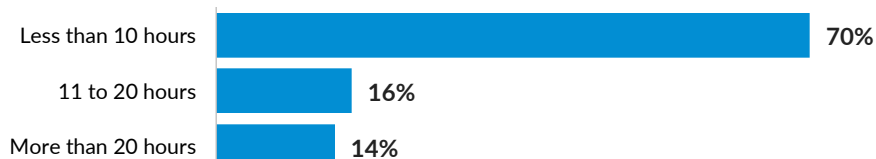
### What best describes the department in which you're currently employed?



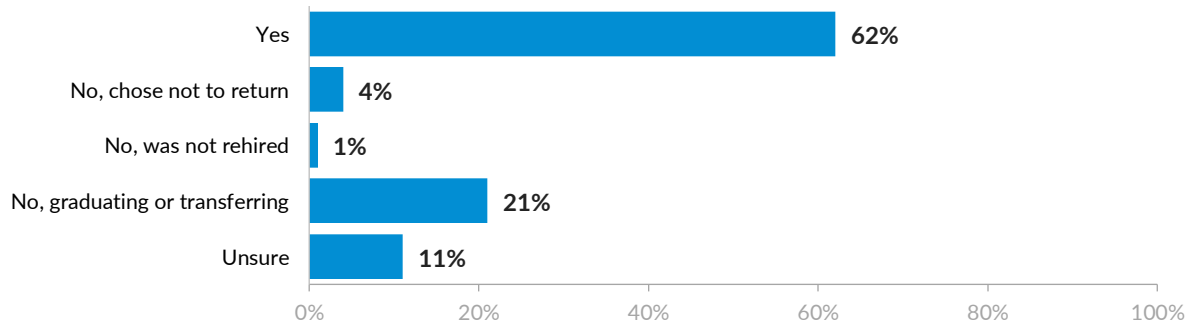
### How many years have you held your current on-campus job?



### In an average week, how many hours do you spend working in your current on-campus job?



### Do you plan to return to your on-campus job next academic year?



## What Do Students Get Out of These Jobs?



*“It’s not just a job—I’ve learned how to manage time, communicate clearly, and solve problems under pressure.”*

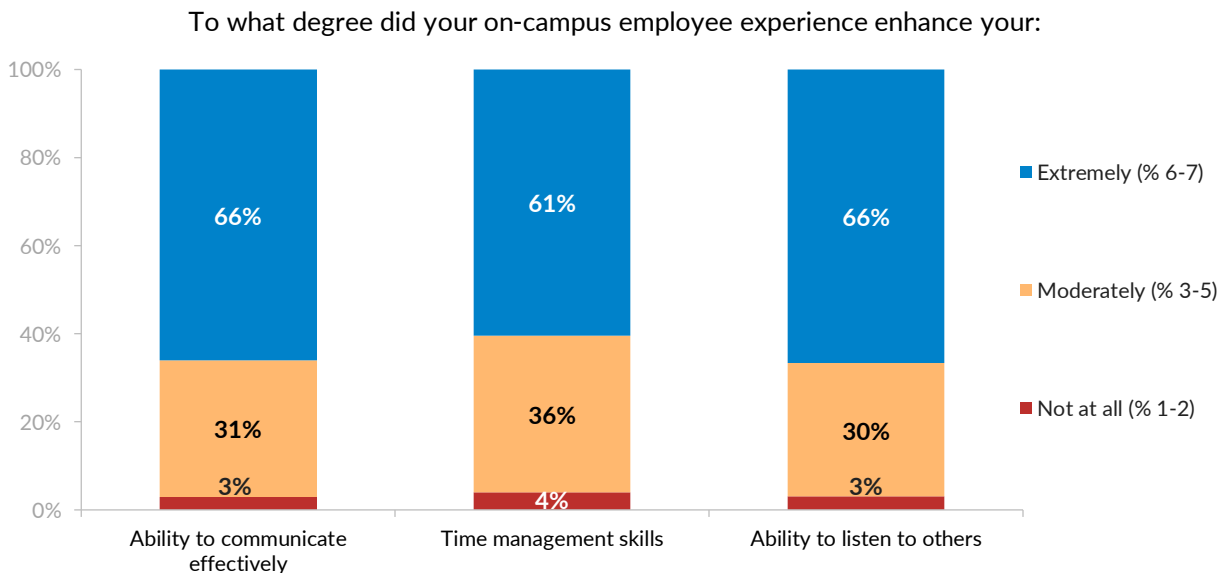
Student employment contributes to a wide range of learning and development outcomes. Students report growth in time management, communication, leadership, collaboration, and problem-solving skills—foundational competencies that serve them both during and beyond college.

Figure 3 summarizes the skills students say were most enhanced by their job. These include both interpersonal and professional skills, reflecting the ways these roles contribute to students’ academic and career readiness.

**FIGURE 3.**

### Student Employment Learning Outcomes

Percent of student employees responding “Extremely” (% 6 or 7) on key learning outcomes



**For further thought:** In what ways do student employees apply the skills they develop at work to their academic and personal life? How can student employee programs enhance learning outcomes? How can we examine the impact of on-campus employment on long-term career success and readiness for the workforce after graduation?



## The Role of Supervisors and Support



*“My supervisor has been an incredible mentor—someone who cares about my growth, not just the work I do.”*

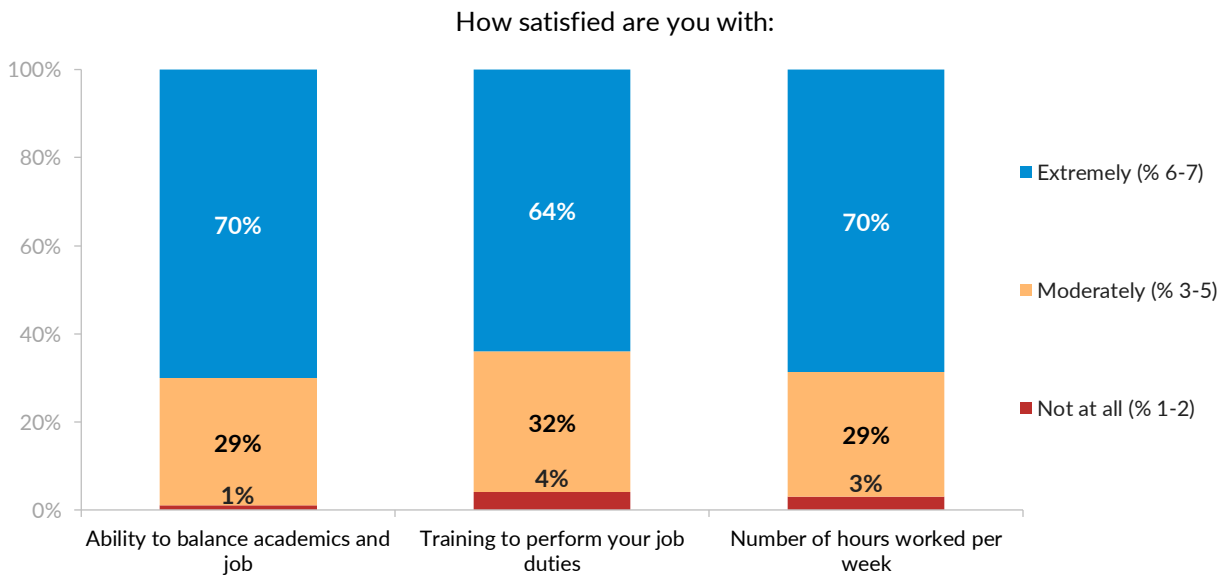
Supervisors play a central role in shaping the student employment experience. From setting expectations to providing mentorship and feedback, strong supervision helps students feel supported in both their work and their academics.

In addition to strong supervisory relationships, students benefit from clear training and guidance. As shown in Figure 4, students report high levels of satisfaction with their orientation, training, and supervisor communication—factors that contribute to a sense of confidence and success in the role.

**FIGURE 4.**

### Satisfaction with Supervision and Training

Percent of student employees responding “Extremely” (% 6 or 7) on questions related to supervision and training



**For further thought:** How can we better prepare supervisors—especially student or graduate staff—to mentor effectively? What policies or tools could help student employees get the support they need without compromising academic balance?



## Overall Experience



*“This job shaped my college experience. It gave me skills, mentors, and memories I’ll take with me long after graduation.”*

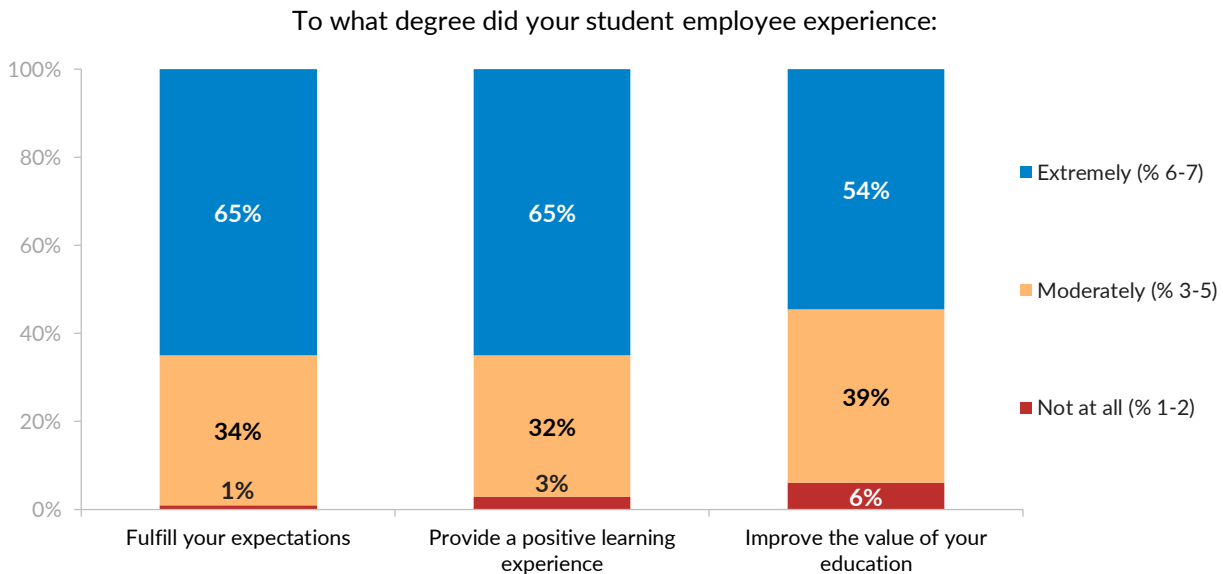
Results from the Benchworks Student Employment Assessment show that student employees are highly satisfied with their experience. Most report strong overall satisfaction with their job, and many would recommend it to a peer.

Figure 5 displays the distribution of satisfaction scores for key measures, including overall job satisfaction, whether students would recommend the position to a friend, and whether the job contributed to their educational experience.

**FIGURE 5.**

### Overall Perceptions of Student Employment Experience

Percent of student employees responding “Extremely” (% 6 or 7) on questions related to their overall experience



**For further thought:** What aspects of student employment are most influential in shaping student perception—supervision, team dynamics, alignment with major? How might job structure or recognition make the experience even more impactful?



## Conclusion



*“This has been so much more than a job. It’s given me real-world experience, confidence, and a sense of purpose.”*

Student employees play an essential role in the life of a campus—and those roles often return the favor. When supported by strong supervision and meaningful responsibilities, student employment contributes significantly to students’ personal development, academic achievement, and readiness for life after college.

The data makes a strong case for treating on-campus jobs as more than hourly work. These roles are opportunities for students to explore their identities, build professional habits, and connect more deeply to the institution. As colleges consider the future of work and student success, reimagining student employment as a developmental experience will be key.

### **For further thought:**

- How can institutions better position student employment as a core part of the learning experience?
- What resources or systems would help departments strengthen their support for student staff?
- How can campuses create more equity in access to high-quality student employment experiences?



## Methods

### Survey

The Benchworks Student Employee Assessment enables institutions to evaluate the experiences and development of on-campus student employees. The survey explores student perceptions of support, supervision, collaboration with co-workers, and the overall impact of their employment on academic and personal development. It also assesses student learning in areas such as empathy, self-knowledge, personal competence, and interactions across difference. Learning outcomes are aligned with, and results are mapped to, the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) student learning and development outcomes.

### Dataset

The findings in this research note are based on aggregate analysis from the 2023-2024 academic year administrations of the Benchworks Student Employee Assessment. In total, 851 students from six institutions in the United States completed the assessment. The average online response rate was 38%.

### Analysis

The insights shared in this research note were developed based on a wide range of statistical analyses, including descriptive analysis (frequencies, means, standard deviations), correlational analysis, cross-tabulations with chi-square analysis, and regression models. The findings in this research note are presented as descriptive analysis, specifically percentages. Results do not indicate whether differences between groups are statistically significant. All figures reflect the number of responses to a question and do not include missing data. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole percent; therefore, some totals may not exactly equal 100.





## About Us

### Elentra

Elentra, a portfolio company of Achieve Partners, empowers health sciences schools to deliver the highest quality education to their students with confidence. With its innovative technology and comprehensive features, Elentra provides a robust platform for managing curriculum, assessments, scheduling, and more. By streamlining administrative processes and enhancing collaboration, Elentra enables educators to focus on what matters most – fostering an exceptional learning experience.

### Benchworks by Elentra

Benchworks by Elentra, a division of Elentra, is a renowned provider of advanced tools that allow institutions to gain insights into overall performance and enhance student outcomes. Benchworks includes over 50 easy-to-use nationally benchmarked program assessments across a portfolio of over a dozen functional areas, including housing and residence life, college union, student activities, new student orientation, campus climate, student services, and select academic programs like nursing and teacher education. The assessments are statistically validated, cover key content areas, map to professional and accreditation standards, and allow for campus-level customization. Robust analytics and easy-to-understand reports deliver high-level trends, identify concepts statistically predictive of outcomes, allow for peer and longitudinal benchmarking, and support a culture of continuous program improvement.

